

# **SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA**

**Summary on  
Thirteenth Chapter  
by  
Swami Paramarthananda**

## SUMMARY (THIRTEENTH CHAPTER)

- Note: 1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.  
2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

[In the first six chapters, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* talked about the nature of *jīva* (*tvaṃ-pada*) and *karmayoga* predominantly. In the second six chapters, *Bhagavān* discussed the nature of *Īśvara* (*tat-pada*) and *upāsanā* predominantly — especially *virāḍ-upāsanā*. When a seeker goes through these stages of understanding and *sādhanam*, he becomes ready for *jñānayoga* which is the recognition of the identity between the *jīva* and *Īśvara* (*asi-pada*). This is the topic which will be dealt with in the following six chapters.]

The thirteenth chapter is presented in the form of six topics — *kṣetram*, *kṣetrajñā*, *jñānam*, *jñeyam*, *puruṣa*, and *prakṛti*.

(Though these are discussed separately, we should note that *kṣetrajñā*, *jñeyam*, and *puruṣa* are the same essentially. Similarly, *kṣetram* and *prakṛti* are essentially the same.)

**KṢETRAM** : The entire objective universe is *kṣetram*. From the beginningless *prakṛti* (*avyaktam*) everything experienced by us comes under this. It includes *mahat* (cosmic intellect), *ahaṅkāra* (cosmic ego), the subtle and gross elements, sense organs of action and perception, the mind and its modifications (6,7). Still, *Kṛṣṇa* specially mentions the body as *kṣetram* (2) because we generally do not see the body as part of the universe.

**KṢETRAJÑĀ** : That conscious principle which illumines the *kṣetram* is called *kṣetrajñā* (2). Having defined *kṣetrajñā*, *Kṛṣṇa* reveals that the *kṣetrajñā* is none other than the Lord (i.e. *Brahman*) Himself who is the consciousness in all bodies (3). Thus, *kṣetrajñā* is one all-pervading consciousness. (This *kṣetrajñā* alone is called *jīva*. So, the idea given here is the essential identity of *jīva* and *Īśvara*.)

**JÑĀNAM** : From the 8th to the 12th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about some important values which prepare the mind for Self-knowledge. They are : humility, simplicity, non-violence, forbearance, honesty, service to the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control, detachment from sense objects, absence of egoism, constant awareness of the misery in birth, death, disease, etc., dispassion, non-identification with son, wife, house, etc., being always equanimous in desirable and undesirable situations, unswerving devotion to the Lord, seclusion, non-indulgence in people's company, constant self-enquiry, and not losing sight of the fruit of Self-knowledge.

**JÑEYAM** : In the next six verses (13th to 18th), *Kṛṣṇa* talks about the Truth which is to be known. It is beginningless, beyond *sat* and *asat* (13), all-pervading, subtle, far (for the ignorant), and near (for the wise) (16). Though undivided, it appears divided and it is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of all (17). It is the light of consciousness which resides in the heart of all (18). Being subtle, it cannot be known in its pure form. Yet, it shines in the body (as Awareness-Existence) and in the world (as Existence). One has to recognise it as pure Awareness-Existence by distinguishing it from the body and the world (14,15). (This method of teaching is called *adhyāropa-apavāda-prakriyā* i.e. the method of superimposition and negation.)

Having talked about these four topics, *Kṛṣṇa* glorifies this knowledge as the one which leads the seeker to Him (19).

**PURUṢA AND PRAKṚTI** : Now comes the last pair, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (20 to 24). Both are beginningless. Blessed by *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* creates everything (20 and 27). (Though beginningless, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are of opposite nature. While *puruṣa* is conscious, changeless, and real, *prakṛti* is inert, changing, and unreal.) The body, the mind, and their activities belong to *prakṛti*, whereas *puruṣa* is a mere illuminator of all these (21). When *puruṣa* obtains in the body as *kṣetrajña*, it seems to be a *kartā*, *bhoktā*, etc. But as *paramātmā*, the absolute, it is ever unaffected and is ever the same (23). Not knowing this, when *puruṣa* (i.e. *kṣetrajña*) identifies with

## SUMMARY

the body and its *guṇas*, then, all limitations and the consequent problems arise (22). One who has the discriminative knowledge of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* attains immortality (24).

In the following verses (25th to 35th) *Kṛṣṇa* sums up the teaching and presents its *sādhanam* and *phalam*. The wise man is one who always abides in the Self, which is the same everywhere (28 and 29), which is actionless (30), and which is unaffected (32) like the space (33) or like the light (34). The Self is not only the illuminator of everything (34) but also the substratum of the whole universe (31). In fact, there is no universe other than the Self (35). One who has assimilated this wisdom is *Brahman* itself (31) and attains the supreme goal of liberation (35).

To gain this knowledge, one has to purify the mind through *karmayoga*, gain knowledge through enquiry (*sāṅkhya-yoga*), and ultimately get established in the knowledge through *dhyānayoga* (25 and 26).

The main topics in this chapter are:

1. Introduction .....	1
2. <i>Kṣetram</i> and <i>kṣetrajñā</i> .....	2 to 7
3. <i>Jñānam</i> .....	8 to 12
4. <i>Jñeyam</i> .....	13 to 19
5. <i>Puruṣa</i> and <i>prakṛti</i> .....	20 to 24
6. <i>Sādhanam</i> and <i>phalam</i> .....	25 to 35

Since the main topic is the discrimination between the *kṣetram* and *kṣetrajñā*, this chapter is called *Kṣetrakṣetrajñāvibhāga-yoga*.

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